WALL STREET AND THE BOLSHEVIK REVOLUTION

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After a good deal nit-picking: "If this were a tweedy, pipe-sucking review, one could go on in this vein for some time."

Up until about a dozen years ago, it was a fundamental belief in proper conservative and related conventional circles that the Communists were to be found in one heap, and the "capitalists" in another, and no one was supposed to more alienated than one was from the other. The only segment of the anti-Communist spectrum that insisted there was some kind of organic relationship between the two might be described as the "radical right," condemned by scholarly respectability because of their emphasis on Jewish capital of some substance at the base of the Bolshevik Revolution.

The picture has changed and broadened substantially in the interim and sustained research plus the opening of long-sealed diplomatic archives has resulted in increasing attention to the part played by Big Finance and Big Industry in the successful floating of the Bolshevik upheaval in Russia. Antony Sutton's latest work, in this vein, is at once a recapitulation of information long known, as well as a revelation in the department of new and electric supporting material to the thesis stated above.

His book should convince even the circles most resistant to the view that capitalists and Communists might get together on something, whose position has been badly shaken by detente and the recent joint Russo-American exploits in space. (Forgotten is the crucial role the USA and Britain played in rescuing Stalinist Soviet Russia from annihilation or gravely shrunken status at the hands of the Germans and Hitler. In retrospect, Roosevelt and Churchill made the world safe for communism, and it has been expanding ever since, riding on a wave of 30 years of successes, which induces Solzhenitsyn to declare that World War III is already over and the Soviets have won it.) Sutton's impressive trilogy, *Western Technology and Soviet Economic Development, 1917–1965,* explains another important aspect of this relationship.

In the book under review here, Sutton has performed an extremely useful task for those who are just becoming acquainted with the subject, tying together previously published materials and hitherto unavailable evidence of some significance, mined from the archives of both the U.S. State Department and the British Foreign Office. The third appendix of documents to this essentially modest little book is alone worth the price.

The writing has a tendency to be repetitive, as the same tale and many of the same characters reappear in additional episodes or contexts. But when Sutton gets through, there is not much one can do to try to discount or brush off the significant part played by major economic factors of the West in launching Lenin and Trotsky on their rocketlike trip to the top of Russian affairs. For many, it may be the first time they have come to realize that there are capitalists and there are capitalists (these days even Big Agriculture has got into the act with the repeated vast grain sales to the Brezhnev regime), and that there is only the faintest link, if any, between firms whose resources are spelled out in 12 figures and the comer banana stand operator or the house-to-house thread peddler.

A succession of opulent and fragrant personalities wanders across Sutton's pages, most of them quite innocent of intellectual persuasions linked to socialist theory and as remote from revolutionary ambitions as a turnip. But their interest in floating loans to the Bolsheviks, contributing substantially to their various intrigues, and panting for the opportunity to become major and sustaining suppliers of vast amounts of goods and services to such a regime is most instructive. On the surface, the latter would appear to be one which one would never believe would tarnish the pure blue light of proletarian socialism with such crass complications, but the record demonstrates a mutual eagerness to collaborate and cooperate.

Sutton's treatment of Olof Aschberg and the American International Corporation is superior, as is his extended emphasis on the peculiar interest and role of selected diplomats in a number of strategically located spots in the world, the continuous involvement of the Morgan name, and his debunking of John Reed and Raymond Robins.

The book suffers from a number of editorial lapses, which are not the author's responsibility. The use of contractions and familiar phraseology is awkward in formal writing. There are several mistakes in names in both text and index (e.g., it is "Beekman Winthrop," not "Beckman Winthrope"); Murmansk becomes "Mur-man" in one instance; Abraham Cahan, editor of the *Jewish Daily Forward,* though the addressee of an important document, is only partially identified in the text and omitted from the index; the German diplomat Franz von Papen's last name is spelled correctly and incorrectly on successive pages, only one of which makes the index, wherein he is also given a new first name, "Fritz." If this were a tweedy, pipe-sucking review, one could go on in this vein for some time. However, the book is attractively printed and readable, and the substance is, after all, the main consideration.

After reading this, you may recall the wry prediction attributed to Lenin (probably much garbled) that when the time comes for the Communists to hang the capitalists, the latter will be spiritedly trying to outbid one another to supply the Communists with the rope. I have a suspicion that there is another possibility: the hanging of capitalists will be *very* selective, and there will be no competitive bidding on the rope contract, as this will be awarded in secrecy to a trillion-dollar multinational corporation, whose board chairman will likely be a nominee for an honorary

membership on the Politburo. **Reviewed by James J. Martin / History / Arlington House, 1974 / $7.95**

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